
TRUST – A LEADERSHIP SKILL

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Abstract:

In these difficult, dramatic days, everyone is looking for a something to hold on. Some are looking for family support, others are looking for colleague's assistance and others can even seek confidence on their job leaders. All these searching are based on trust gained. People are running where they find trust, honesty and solutions to their problems.

Keywords: leader, trust, motivation

Every employee expect from leader honestly about the real facts of the situation, of the problem, vision about how to get out the crisis, focusing on the company's strategy and wisdom about how to determine those employees to work together to overcome the situation. It is necessary in tough times that the leader listens to his employees' concerns, shows empathy and reminds them of the previous successes, and to obtain another success in this problem they are facing with and the only way to obtain it is to work together as a team. Essential is the unity of the group he is leading and above all, gaining their trust. Many studies have shown the importance of great leaders in facing every situation.

According to Marian Năstase and other researchers (Năstase M., 2007), skills that a leader should have are given below:

- **Visionary:** Leader should see and sense the future changes that can take place in the business or external environment and welcome change accordingly. He should motivate and encourage his subordinates to work along with him, to face that change, and also he should benchmark and be an example for his subordinates.
- **Courage:** Leaders should develop their own capacity on taking the risks of the business.
- **Self-Awareness:** It means to realize that indeed he is a leader, by understanding and recognizing his own values, needs and biases.
- **Credibility:** Believability is achieved through both honesty and consistency between both the leader's statements and actions. Credible leaders are straightforward with their subordinates and behave in such a manner that earns the subordinates` respect and trust.

- **Problem-solver:** Leader should possess the skill to solve the problems arising on daily basis and should have divergent and convergent skill to tackle the opposition.
- **A team-builder:** A good team-builder has the ability to divide the task efficiently and reward those who perform well but also, keeping in mind not to discourage other members of the team.
- **Respect for employees:** This includes the belief that individuals are responsible for their own actions and ideas. It includes an awareness of a person's individuality by recognizing their unique values, attributes and skills.
- **Empathy:** Empathetic leaders will be better able to help subordinates identify the situation and then develop a plan to improve it.
- **A manager:** He should know how to manage people, time, energy, emotions.
- **A communicator:** He should communicate with his subordinates, speaking to them, addressing their problems, see that they may trust him. He also should know how to communicate both verbally and in writing so that he could motivate the employees.
- **A planner:** He should possess the planning skills and should use the planning tools to achieve short and medium term goals, which plays a vital role in the achievement of long-term goals. Also he should make different strategies for the accomplishment of settled goals.

All these rolls are not easy to perform, that is why a leader's role is such a complex one, expecting special skills and traits and above all trust.

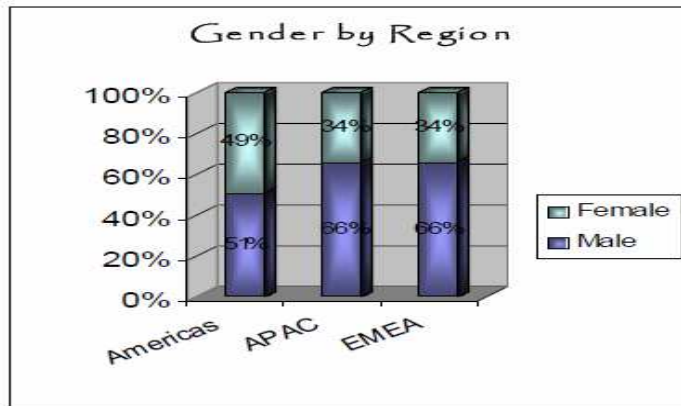
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The World Leadership Survey (CCL, 2009) helps organizations gain a better understanding of employees' perceptions of organizational leadership and employees' commitment to their organizations. From the report were extracted the results useful to the subject approached. The survey included respondents from three regions: the Americas, Asia Pacific (APAC), and Europe, the Middle East & Africa (EMEA). Extracting some of their results I would like to focus on leader, seen as model by their followers.

Here is some information about respondents, helping this to understand the results and so to conclude.

The average age of respondents is 46. According to the three regions, the percent of respondents by regions are: 11% APAC, 14% EMEA and 75 % Americas. The gender of respondents according to the three regions is represented in figure below, Figure 1: Gender by Region.

Figure 1. Gender by Region

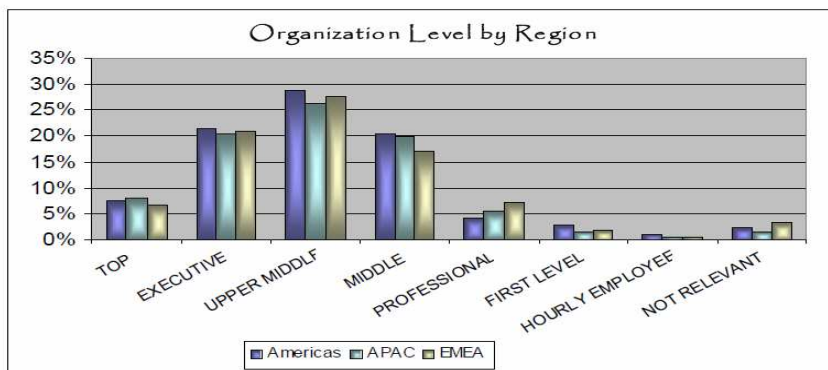


Source: The World Leadership Survey, January, 2009

The survey included 49% female respondents from Americas, the rest of them in percent of 51% were men. In the other two regions, APAC and EMEA, percentages of respondents were the same, 34% female respondents and 66% male respondents.

The organizational level of the surveys respondents, according to the three regions is represented in the Figure 2: Organizational Level by Region. The survey included all workers, from top management to bottom line workers.

Figure 2. Organizational Level by Region



Source: The World Leadership Survey, January, 2009

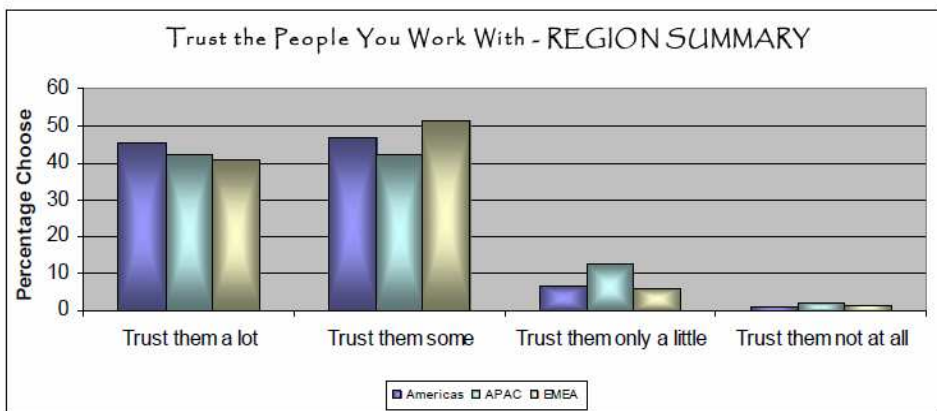
It can be seen that upper middle representatives were in majority through respondents, followed by executives and then middle representatives. The majority of respondents occupied leading positions, fact that is relevant to this survey.

From the World Leadership Survey were extracted some charts results that reveal respondents point of view and in fact their beliefs about trust.

“Trust is a critical element of organizational life, the lack of which can result in less efficiency and commitment at work. One important element of trust at work is employees trusting the people they work with on a day-to-day basis. Fundamentally, the ability of an organization to function efficiently enough to survive— and perhaps thrive rests almost entirely on the willingness of co-workers to work effectively together — to trust both that the work will get done and that the motives for the decisions are fair. The interdependence necessary for successful peer interaction and teamwork requires trust. If this willingness to trust is absent, an organization is fraught with conflict, much slower, less efficient, and definitely less viable, especially in this current economic crisis”(CCL, 2009).

From the same questions about respondents trusting the people they work with, were made three charts according to different point of view of the same issue: region summary (Figure 3), organizational level summary (Figure 4) and age summary (Figure 5).

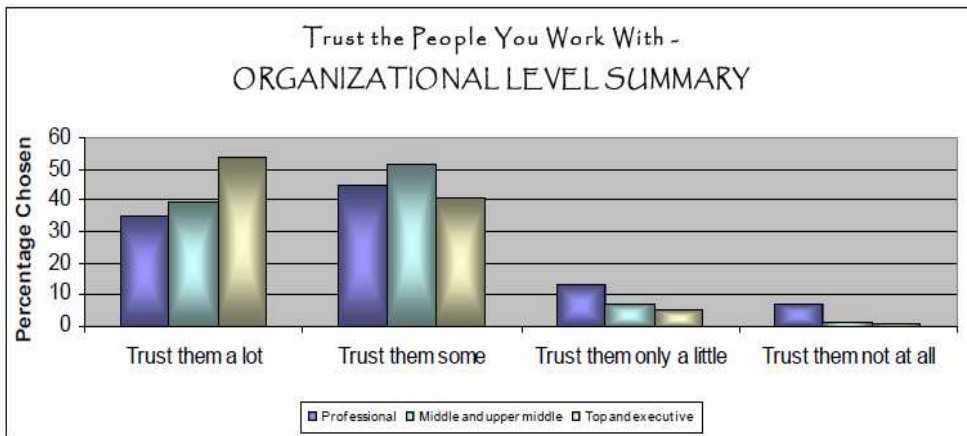
Figure 3. Trust the people you work with – Region summary



Source: *The World Leadership Survey, January, 2009*

According to region differences, the results showed that there are no differences by region. More than 80% of people from all regions trust the people they work with some or a lot.

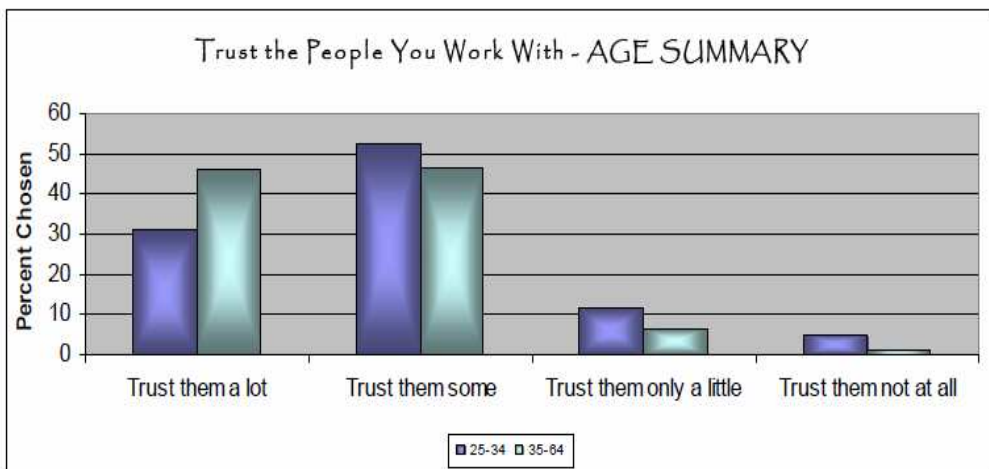
Figure 4. Trust the people you work with – Organizational level summary



Source: The World Leadership Survey, January, 2009

According to this, people higher in the organization are significantly more likely to say they trust the people they work with. What this means is that executives are likely to not perceive a trust issue because they trust the people they work with, while people lower down (who there are more of) are likely to have large trust issues.

Figure 5. Trust the people you work with – Age summary



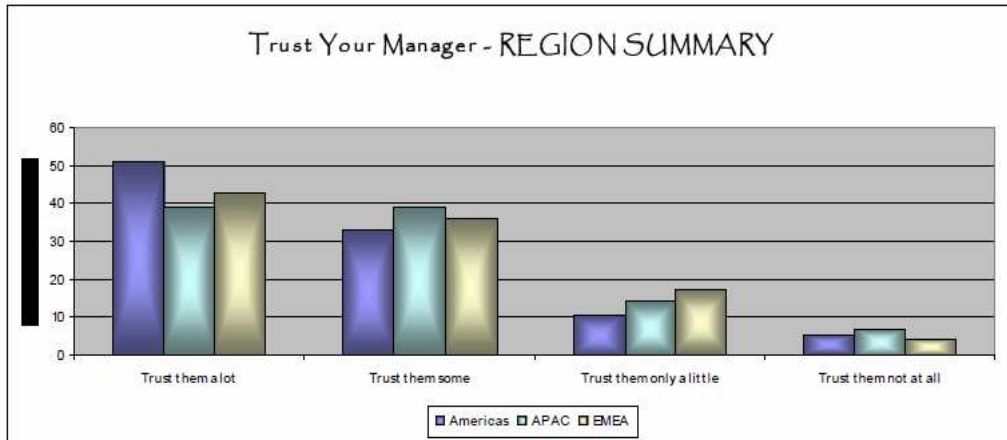
Source: The World Leadership Survey, January, 2009

The last point of view of this issue is age summary. Older workers trust the people they work with more than younger respondents do. What this means is that older people are likely to not perceive as significant a trust issue as younger people are.

In any organization it is important to trust your colleagues, but also it is important to trust the manager of the organization. With three different point of view of

the issue “Trust your manager” were presented the results: region summary (Figure 6), organizational level summary (Figure 7) and age summary (Figure 8).

Figure 6. Trust your manager – Region summary



Source: *The World Leadership Survey, January, 2009*

It can be seen that there are differences by region. Respondents from the Americas report having more trust in their manager than do respondents from EMEA or APAC.

Figure 7. Trust your manager – Organizational level summary

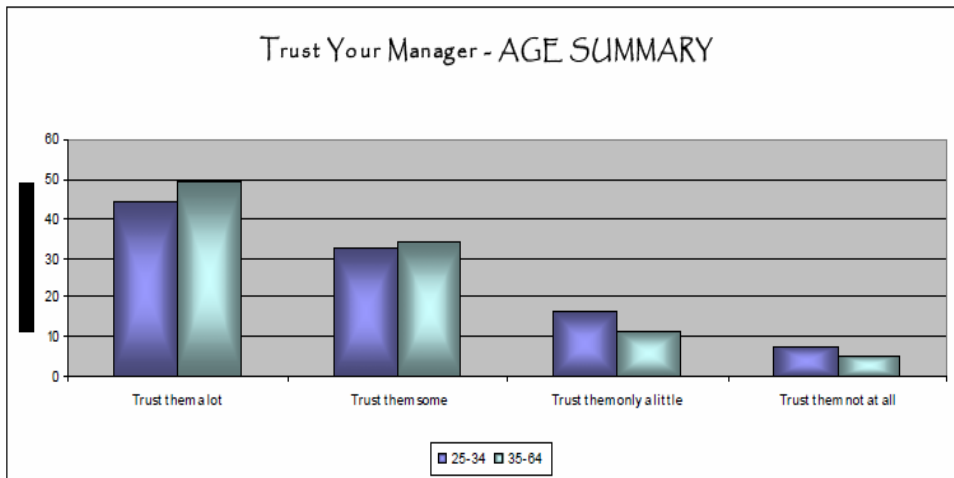


Source: *The World Leadership Survey, January, 2009*

It is interesting to notice that people higher in the organization are significantly more likely to say they trust their manager than are people lower in the organization. This difference in perceptions of trust can cause problems for leaders because they

can be seen as being disconnected from the reality within the organization which is that there is a substantial trust issue. Trust is in the eye of the beholder and just because executives trust doesn't mean most of the employees do.

Figure 8. Trust your manager – Age summary



Source: The World Leadership Survey, January, 2009

The results showed that older workers trust their manager more than younger respondents do. One explanation for this result is that older people tend to be at higher levels in the organization, and people at higher levels have more trust for reasons mentioned earlier.

After identifying respondents' perceptions about trusting the people they work with and their managers, it is very important to determine the relation between this trust gained or lost and employee's motivation perception. If employees are well motivated the leader is responsible for that, if not the leader must do something in order not to lose those people. Motivation can be divided in financial or non-financial.

Here are some payment systems that organizations can use to motivate its employees:

- **Wages and salaries** – It is known that wages are normally paid per hour worked and workers receive money at the end of the week, especially in America used. But salaries it is known that are paid at the end of each month and are based on a previous contract between parts;
- **Piece-rate** – It means paying a worker by his productivity, calculating the rate per item he produces in a certain period of time. As an advantage, this may increase workers speed and by that productivity, but there may be also disadvantages like reducing the quality of work;
- **Fringe Benefits** – This refers to items an employee receives in addition to their normal wage or salary, like company car or phone, free meals, private health

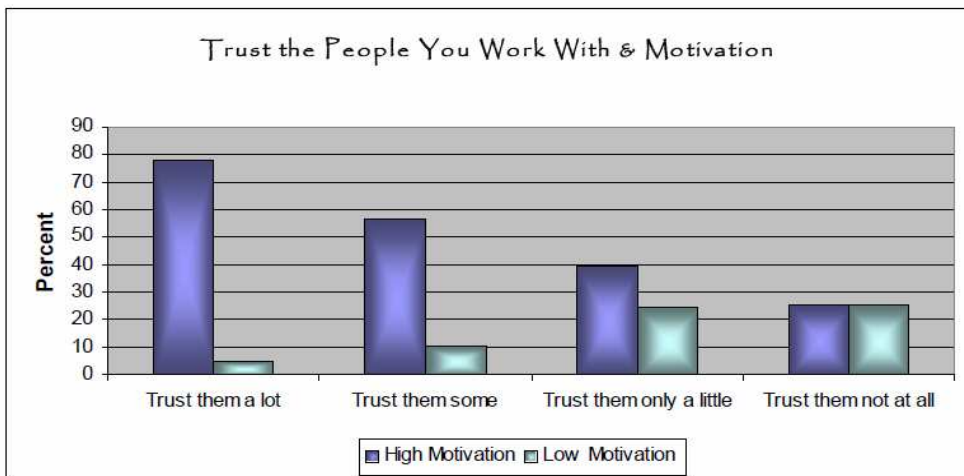
insurance, free tickets to gym, concerts and vacations, etc. All these can increase employees commitment and loyalty to organization;

- Performance-related pay – It rewards great employees that reach established targets, but it can be a harmfully to the organization by increasing competition that will destroy team working projects;
- Profit sharing – It means that employees receive a percentage of the organization's profit. This should improve loyalty to the company between employees, but often this part of the profit is too small to encourage employees increasing productivity;
- Share ownership – Up to their possibilities, employees may buy shares from the organization and so to become shareholders to it. This is indeed an effective financial motivation for employees that will determine them to work harder, but often this opportunity is available only for senior managers, so this can cause resentment among other staff.

But also non-financial motivation can increase productivity like: job enrichment, job enlargement or delegating routine and simple tasks, congratulations in public and team working.

“An individual's motivation is important because greater motivation leads to increased productivity, while diminished motivation leads to less productivity. Increased motivation on the part of employees can also lead to better alignment with the vision within the organization, which can result in organization-wide improvements in efficiency and effectiveness” (CCL, 2009). Here were determined trust in people respondents work with (Figure 9) and in their manager (Figure 10) and according to these their motivation.

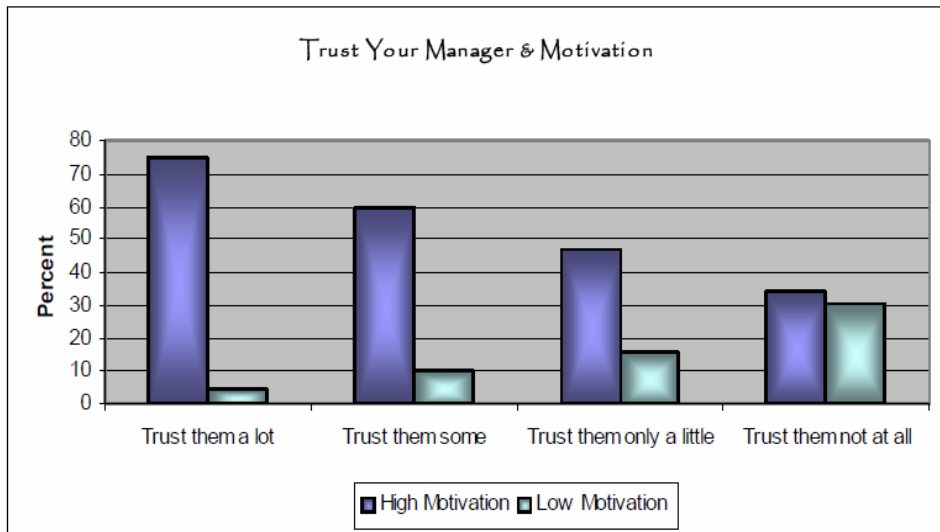
Figure 9. Trust the people you work with & Motivation



Source: The World Leadership Survey, January, 2009

Results revealed that those who trust the people they work with are more likely to say they are motivated than are those with lower levels of trust. This is true for all regions, all levels, and all ages.

Figure 10. Trust your manager & Motivation



Source: The World Leadership Survey, January, 2009

The results show that those who trust their manager are more likely to say they are motivated than are those with lower levels of trust. This is true for all regions, all levels and all ages.

Trust is one of those things that is earned and not given freely. Gaining someone's trust is something that comes with time and proven loyalty. To earn trust, a leader must prove his level of honesty. Respect goes hand in hand with trust. Without it, there can be no trust.

Here are some advices for leaders in gaining and maintaining trust (Heller, R., 1999):

- If promises are made, they should always be kept.
- Going behind people's backs is not permissible.
- People should be kept fully informed of anything that might directly affect them.
- Performance should be judged and rewarded fairly.

The first job of any leader is to inspire trust, said Steven Covey and recognized as one of Time Magazine's 25 most influential Americans, an internationally respected leadership authority, family expert, teacher, organizational consultant and author, his advice has given insight to millions. "Trust is confidence born of two dimensions: character and competence. Character includes your integrity, motive, and intent with people. Competence includes your capabilities, skills, results, and track record. Both dimensions are vital", said Steven Covey. He has identified 13 common

behaviors of trusted leaders around the world that build and allow maintaining trust (www.leadershipnow.com). These are:

- **Character behaviors:**
 1. Talk Straight
 2. Demonstrate Respect
 3. Create Transparency
 4. Right Wrongs
 5. Show Loyalty
- **Competence behaviors:**
 6. Deliver Results
 7. Get Better
 8. Confront Reality
 9. Clarify Expectation
 10. Practice Accountability
- **Character and competence behaviors:**
 11. Listen First
 12. Keep Commitments
 13. Extend Trust

Gaining organizational trust is a key leadership skill, because trust is difficult to build, but it is easy to lose. Every leader must work hard for gaining his followers trust and then in finding ways of showing people that he trust them to act effectively.

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